

ry). Most interested readers will be social scientists involved in the research of income distribution and social protection in EU member countries and those studying the effect of economic transition on labour markets, income distribution and social welfare. As the book is not technical, it is also accessible to the non-academic audience, such as policy experts or the general public.

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Georgina Waylen: *Engendering Transitions: Women's Mobilization, Institutions, and Gender Outcomes*
Oxford and New York 2007: Oxford University Press, 241 pp.

This book introduces the reader to an apparent paradox of democratic transition regarding gender rights: 'why is it that some of the most active women's movements were unable to translate the importance of their pre-transition activism into greater gains in the immediate post-transition period?' (p. 1) In her attempts to get to the bottom of this paradox, Waylen thematically investigates the process of transition in both state socialist and in, as she qualifies, 'some forms of authoritarian regimes'. The first group comprises the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland while the second has Argentina, Brazil, Chile and El Salvador in it. Waylen also uses the USSR as a comparator case for the first group and Peru for the second (p. 43). In order to qualify how pre-transition activism translates into gains in the post-transition period, Waylen uses themes such as 'women organising during the different stages of transitions to democracy', 'the electoral arena', and 'the state and policy outcomes'. While discussing the process of transition, *Engendering Transitions* also shows how gender is profoundly implicated in the democratic transition process from authoritarian regimes of different colours. The book's most original contribution is to frame democratic transitions using gender activism and to trace whether such gender activism could enhance the position of women in the aftermath of democratic transitions or not. This is a laudable effort of the book given the comprehensive list of countries, which the author studies.

The book offers an extensive discussion of gender and politics and of the democratisation literature. Inevitably a discussion of democratisation as lengthy as Waylen's falls into the trap of repeating what has been covered elsewhere, while

reaching awkward conclusions such as 'even women's suffrage is not absolutely essential to a narrow definition [of democracy] and although mid-range definitions include women's civil and political rights, only the more utopian definitions can accommodate women's social and economic rights' (p. 16). This is an over-statement in the sense that even common sense would suggest that without universal suffrage there is no democracy and democracies improve their quality through entrenching social and economic rights not only for women but comprehensively for the society as a whole. However, the author adopts and later maintains a specific approach to democracy when she commits herself to specify the particular constellations of political and economic transitions would have gendered implications. A crucial question, which Waylen raises, is whether there is a relationship between poor quality of democracy and poor quality of gender outcomes.

The theoretical approach of the book is solid and legitimate. Waylen suggests uniting two major elements of macro-historical analysis, namely, path dependence and historical institutionalism, with feminist analyses. And in order to answer the question of under what circumstances transition to democracy can result in positive gender outcomes, Waylen focuses on both actors, institutions as well as contextual factors, in order to substantiate her gendered analysis of transitions. The organisation of the book along the themes introduced is clear and succinct. Once the author lays down the theoretical and methodological framework, the book first portrays the situation of women under authoritarian regimes. Following up, it then deals with the role of women's movements in civil society and changing political opportunity structures, how conventional political arena is gendered during transitions to democracy and finally women's substantive representation. While the author strives to maintain a thematic argument, country-oriented discus-

sions still dominate. For instance, from her study of the authoritarian regimes she concludes that 'despite often-ferocious levels of repression, many authoritarian regimes offered opportunities for diverse forms of women's organising to emerge in an international context that from the mid-1970s offered increasing support' (p. 61) while from her study of state socialism it is noteworthy that 'isolated influences, feminism and women's emancipation were negatively associated with state socialism in East Central Europe and the majority of women who organised outside the official organisations did not do so explicitly as women or around gender issues' (p. 65). Nonetheless, the author also reaches some generalisable outcomes when she states that 'in order to have some influence over a rapid transition from either state socialism or authoritarianism, it appears that women have to be organised as women already' (p. 69). Later, Waylen argues that it was not only very hard for autonomous women's organisations of any sort to emerge under state socialism, but it was also difficult for women's movements to emerge in the post-transition period where they had not already existed (p. 90). Yet, the overall conclusion is that their visibility in the electoral arena affected the women's position the most. Hence, I will explore Waylen's arguments in further detail with respect to how visibility in the electoral arena affects the position of women.

The investigation of the electoral arena is where the author tests her institutional arguments, looking at three themes: 'the level of women's descriptive representation in the post-transition period [...], the roles that the women have played in the conventional political arena during various stages; and the contribution that women active in conventional political arena have made to any improvements to women's descriptive and substantive status' (p. 93). What is novel here is the suggested impact of different party systems on women's organising along with the relationship between parties, women activists, and the number of wom-

en elected (p. 96). In order to shed light on this rather under-researched theme, Waylen gives examples from different party structures and institutionalisation, ideology, women activists, and quotas. Like in the previous section, despite the interesting debate which Waylen puts forward, detailed information from individual country-cases makes the discussion difficult to follow, and the author falls into the trap of repeating the literature with conclusions such as 'left-wing parties have more egalitarian ideologies and are therefore more likely to be open to arguments favouring justice for excluded groups' (pp. 122–123). Identifying various party systems and types as the institutional factors in effect to women's representation using basic and accessible tables would have made Waylen's argument more accessible.

The author poses fascinating research questions, such as, 'do some transitions to democracy offer greater opportunities for gender policy reform than others and why? and how far do the differing starting points and transitions paths contribute to different gender outcomes?' (p. 138) She responds to these questions with specifying factors such as 'the extent to which reform activists can both frame their campaigns in line with the dominant policy discourse in that area and utilise any international gender rights norms; the openness of the policy context and the strength of counter-movements to reform in that issue area' (p. 164). In order to assess her points, Waylen looks at policy developments in divorce and family law, domestic violence, and reproductive rights (abortion). She concludes that policy alliances depend on issues under discussion and the cohesiveness of alliances varies between issues. However, 'the realisation of positive gender outcomes and improvements in substantive representation requires adequate resources and active state intervention' (p. 196). Hence, Waylen aligns herself with the need for an active state for positive gender outcomes and states that 'the shortcomings in many women's access

to social and economic rights reduce their capacity to exercise their newly (re)gained civil and political rights' (p. 196).

Eventually, what is at the centre of Waylen's discussion is the mode of social and economic transitions and the shortcomings in many women's access to social and economic rights. While women's civil and political rights have increased as a result of transitions to democracy, their social and economic rights have not necessarily been enhanced.

In conclusion, in order to ascertain the circumstances under which transitions to democracy result in positive gender outcomes, Waylen opposes determinism, but emphasises the contingency of outcomes and how actors can shape events even in the most constraining of circumstances. Overall, Waylen's book is a valuable effort to concentrate on women's movements during and after the transition. While there has been research on various civil society organisations during transitions to democracy, a book studying women in particular fills a major gap in the literature. Waylen engages in a laudable effort to compare various cases, although the book would have been more compact had she concentrated on fewer cases. The reader neither understands why these cases were selected nor what differentiated them from each other. The reason for introducing comparator cases is also vague. Waylen predominantly uses English literature, whereas Spanish resources are scarce. Nonetheless, the author makes abundant references to English language publications by country-experts, mainly from Hungary, Poland and Czech Republic. Despite its drawbacks, however, this is a fascinating study that fills a major gap both in research and teaching in the fields of gender studies, area studies, and democratisation courses.

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